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RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 6154  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 4980  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 003177

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SUBJECT: A SETBACK TO OUR COIN STRATEGY

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, for reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

¶11. (U) This is an action cable, please see para 10.

¶12. (C) Summary. Funding to train and equip Pakistan's Frontier Corps has been reduced to \$25 million in the 2009 DOD Authorization bill. (It was \$75 million in the FY08 DOD Supplemental. There is no FMF available.) Since a better trained, better equipped Frontier Corps is the backbone of our counter-insurgency strategy in the tribal areas, this reduction in funding is a serious blow. Moreover, it comes at a time when the Frontier Corps is under new and far more promising leadership, both the Army and the Frontier Corps are engaged in serious combat with militants in both Swat and Bajaur, and, after a long delay, it appears as if Special Forces training for the Frontier Corps is back on track. U.S. training of other Pakistani security forces and militia has only reinforced our confidence in the basic premise of the U.S. Security Development Plan; the Frontier Corps is the only Pakistani military organization with the scope and organization to help the Army clear and hold the tribal areas. Please advise what other sources of funding might be available for this national priority. End Summary.

¶13. (SBU) The 2009 DOD Authorization bill approved by the Congress September 24 and awaits the President's signature includes only \$25 million for train and equip monies for Pakistan's Frontier Corps (FC). Funding in 2008 and our request for 2009 were for \$75 million in train and equip authority for the FC. The language of the bill appears to prohibit use of Section 1206 funds for paramilitary forces like the Frontier Corps, restricting the funds for use in building capacity in "national military forces." This follows on the Congress' decision not to include additional FMF funding in the DOD 2009 supplemental, which could have been used to fund FC support.

¶14. (C) This unexpected change in authorization could significantly undercut our ability to support the GOP in its recently invigorated efforts to defeat the insurgency. It comes at a time when the Pakistani Army and FC are fighting in both Swat, Northwest Frontier Province, and Bajaur, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Bajaur straddles a key link between Pakistan and Afghanistan, is a base for insurgents, and has been the source of increased cross-border attacks on U.S./ISAF forces in Afghanistan. Chief of Army Staff General Kayani has just appointed one of his best major generals, MG Tariq Khan, as the new Inspector General for the FC; Khan already is reinvigorating the FC with plans to increase salaries, improve morale, and introduce much needed troop rotations, but his forces lack training and remain woefully under-equipped. Khan predicted that the Bajaur

operation, one he characterized as critical for Pakistan's ability to roll back a growing militant insurgency, would take several more months to succeed. After Bajaur, the FC and the Army, which just sent another brigade to Bajaur, plan to move operations to neighboring Mohmand Agency.

¶15. (C) The U.S. is in the midst of helping the GOP provide COIN-based relief and support for populations displaced by Pakistani military action in Swat and Bajaur. This military action is a welcome change that demonstrates a new degree of political will to take on the militants; however, it is clear the Pakistanis still lack adequate counter-insurgency capabilities.

¶16. (C) Post is aware of the concern by some in Washington about the reliability of the FC; the reality is that the Punjab-based Pakistani Army has proven ineffective in fighting alone in the Pashtun-dominated FATA. USG efforts to train Pakistani SSG (Special Forces), the tribal Levies and the NWFP police have enhanced security to some extent. However, these forces do not have the scope, organizational structure or size required to do the job.

¶17. (C) The Pashtun-based FC is the only local force with the adequate level of organization and leadership required to help the Army clear areas of militancy; it is also the best placed force to hold areas that have been cleared. The way to improve the effectiveness and reliability of the FC is to provide this force with equipment and training, and we have made this effort the cornerstone of our strategy in helping the GOP defeat militant forces in FATA.

ISLAMABAD 00003177 002 OF 002

¶18. (C) Reductions in funding now would send a message to Islamabad that we are not committed to enhanced U.S.-Pakistan military-military cooperation in the FATA. The new civilian government would not be slow to recognize that we are giving them less support for the FC than we gave to President Musharraf's government. Moreover, this would undermine a whole range of proposed cooperation, from FC training due to begin in October to a Joint military Operations Coordination Center (JMOCC) planned for Tarbella intended to improve U.S.-Pakistani intelligence coordination. Therefore, we now face the challenge of cobbling together from a variety of pots of money \$56 million in funding to fill the shortfall for this critical element of our counter-insurgency strategy. (Total FY09 requirement is just over \$81 million.)

¶10. (C) Post has been encouraged by the Deputies Committee's interest in what is needed to support COIN strategy in Pakistan. We welcome Washington suggestions on how we can make up this shortfall.

PATTERSON